

Holbrooke, and Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers for the signing of two landmark Protocols that address prostitution, the impact of pornography on children, and the global practice of child labor. This resolution applauds the decision by the U.S. government to support the Protocol that condemns the use of children as soldiers by government and nongovernment forces.

This week, this body passed H. Con. Res. 348, a resolution that condemns the use of children as soldiers. And there is a good reason why we did that. It is important to note, however, this amendment only seeks to stop governments, not all nongovernmental forces or rebels, who find ways to bring children into armed conflict. That limitation cannot be imposed on the nongovernmental forces at this time.

It is estimated that this year some 300,000 children under the age of 18 are engaged in armed military conflicts in more than 30 countries. Sadly, far too many of these wonderful children are forcibly conscripted through kidnapping or coercion and others joined because of economic necessity, to avenge the loss of a family member or for their own personal safety. There are so many stories of children being abused in this way.

Military commanders often separate children from their families in order to foster dependence on military units and leaders, leaving such children vulnerable to manipulation. That is clearly unacceptable. I believe it is very unfortunate that military forces actually force child soldiers to commit terrible acts of killings or torture against their enemies, including against other children.

Last August, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1261, condemning the use of children in armed conflict. On May 25, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted an Optional Protocol on the use of child soldiers. This is a sensible addition to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As my colleagues are well aware, The Protocol extends much needed protection for children. My fellow Americans, this is one of the first international commitments made by this nation that protects our children. We can no longer deny that thousands of children are killed, brutalized, and sold into slavery. In Sierra Leone, half of the rebel forces are under 18 and some are even as young as 4 or 5 years of age.

The Protocol addresses such action by raising the international minimum age for conscription and direct participation in armed conflict to age 18, it encourages governments to raise the minimum legal age for voluntary recruits above the current standard of 15 years of age, and it commits governments to support the demobilization and rehabilitation of child soldiers.

That is a very strong step forward. It speaks to an international sense of justice that should, indeed must be honored by governments around the world. We should commend President Clinton, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke, and U.S. Secretary Lawrence Summers for their leadership on this issue.

My amendment will simply make clear that nations will not receive assistance if they use children as soldiers. It is entirely consistent with our international obligations and will effectuate such intent in a clear and straightforward manner.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

[From the Human Rights Watch]
STOP THE USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS!
THE VOICES OF CHILD SOLDIERS

1. "One boy tried to escape [from the rebels], but he was caught . . . His hands were tied, and then they made us, the other new captives, kill him with a stick. I felt sick. I knew this boy from before. We were from the same village. I refused to kill him and they told me they would shoot me. They pointed a gun at me, so I had to do it. The boy was asking me, 'Why are you doing this?' I said I had no choice. After we killed him, they made us smear his blood on our arms . . . they said we had to do this so we would not fear death and so we would not try to escape . . . I still dream about the boy from my village who I killed. I see him in my dreams, and he is talking to me and saying I killed him for nothing, and I am crying."—Susan, 16 abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda.

2. "The army was a nightmare. We suffered greatly from the cruel treatment we received. We were constantly beaten, mostly for no reason at all, just to keep us in a state of terror. I still have a scar on my lip and sharp pains in my stomach from being brutally kicked by the older soldiers. The food was scarce, and they made us walk with heavy loads, much too heavy for our small and malnourished bodies. They forced me to learn how to fight the enemy, in a war that I didn't understand why was being fought."—Emilio, recruited by the Guatemalan army at age 14.

3. "They gave me pills that made me crazy. When the craziness got in my head, I beat people on their heads and hurt them until they bled. When the craziness got out of my head I felt guilty. If I remembered the person I went to them and apologized. If they did not accept my apology, I felt bad."—a 13-year old former child soldier from Liberia.

4. "I was in the front lines the whole time I was with the [opposition force]. I used to be assigned to plant mines in areas the enemy passed through. They used us for reconnaissance and other things like that because if you're a child the enemy doesn't notice you much; nor do the villagers."—former child soldier from Burma/Myanmar.

5. "They beat all the people there, old and young, they killed them all, nearly 10 people . . . like dogs they killed them . . . I didn't kill anyone, but I saw them killing . . . the children who were with them killed too . . . with weapons . . . they made us drink the blood of people, we took blood from the dead into a bowl and they made us drink . . . then when they killed the people they made us eat their liver, their heart, which they took out and sliced and fried . . . And they made us little one eat."—Peruvian woman, recruited by the Shining Path at age 11.

REFERENCES

1. Human Rights Watch interview, Gulu, Uganda, May 1997.
2. Testimony given at a Congressional briefing on child soldiers, sponsored by Human Rights Watch, Washington, DC, December 3, 1997.
3. Human Rights Watch interview, Liberia, April 1994.
4. Rachel Brett and Margaret McCallin, "Children: The Invisible Soldiers", (Radda Barnen, 1996), p. 127.
5. Center for Defense Information, "The Invisible Soldiers: Child Combatants," The Defense Monitor, July 1997.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Chairman, we have no speakers other than a closing statement by me, and I continue to reserve my point of order.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). The gentleman reserves his point of order.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), the distinguished ranking member of the Subcommittee on Africa.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Chairman, let me thank the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for offering this very important amendment.

Mr. Chairman, we have seen the exploitation of children. We have seen the exploitation in labor. We have seen the exploitation in sexual abuse, and we have seen the exploitation of children as relates to conflicts. In Sierra Leone, children as young as 10 and 12 are given weapons by the dreaded RUF, a group of brutal rebels who have armed children, and other conflicts throughout Africa and Latin America.

Mr. Chairman, we have seen children on the front lines, the Lord's Resistance Movement, as it was mentioned, up in northern Uganda, uses children as the frontline fighters, so when the government troops attempt to get the Lord's Resistance Movement, a rebel group, the children are put in front and the children then are in harm's way, with the military of Uganda reluctant to fire on the children.

Mr. Chairman, this is really a tactic that is used by these terrible despots and clan leaders, and so I think that this makes a lot of sense. We should not have people under the age of 18 in combat. We believe that the exploitation is unbelievable, that in this modern day that we can no longer accept what is going on in the world. I believe that we should support this. I think that it is a right thing to do.

I would hope that the point of order would be waived at this point in time, because I believe that this amendment by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) which would prohibit funding in the bill for Nations that conscript children under the age of 18 or use children soldiers in armed conflict should pass.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), a Member of the Committee on Appropriations and a fighter for world justice.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for offering this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, we have spent a lot of time on this floor in the last day talking about how at a time of prosperity we should be reaching out to families, to children around the world, helping them get educated, providing health care, providing the very basics of life. And then when we hear the horrors of these children who, in addition to lacking education and health care, are